

A Charter for Responsible Housebuilding

The Good Homes Alliance Manifesto



As we face an uncertain climate future, every industry and sector has a responsibility to mitigate its impact on the climate, including the construction of new homes. Until very recently new home standards were being improved on a regular basis via the Building Regulations and via progressive policies at a Local Authority level; this was stopped by Government supposedly to remove barriers to building more homes and the Zero Carbon Homes target abandoned with no clear replacement plan. This was despite UK government commitments to COP21 and emissions reductions targets for 2050. In the absence of any improvement plan the old regulatory and compliance systems are now failing occupants, with new homes experiencing problems such as overheating and other quality issues affecting our health and wellbeing. Additionally, the house building sector is not currently playing its part in meeting the UK carbon budget for 2020 or beyond and is now lagging behind other industrial sectors.

Quality issues in housebuilding have been identified recently as a problem by Ministers but these have been known about for many years and the solutions identified numerous times. The problem is that without changes to regulation and compliance the wider industry does not feel compelled to act, only the few take this issue to heart and are rightly seen as in the vanguard of a responsible housing movement.

As a direct result of many meetings and discussions with developers, local authorities, planners, architects, campaigning organisations, industry representatives, suppliers and academic institutions, the Good Homes Alliance brings together like-minded organisations that advocate responsible housebuilding, deliver quality, continually improve their environmental impact and address the health and wellbeing agenda in new homes.

Whilst the Government appears reluctant to build on 10 years of great work to improve the environmental impact and quality of new housebuilding, the sector has not been idle and has recognised that at some point solutions will be needed. Encouragingly, many still remain in the industry who have the knowledge and expertise and the GHA proposes an action plan with its members to address the range of quality issues pertinent to wider sustainability in new housing in the UK. The GHA has much expertise within our coalition and urges Government to engage directly so that we can bring this resource to bear upon the issues.

The GHA considers the following actions are necessary to help bring a quality focus back to new housing:

1. New UK wide near-zero carbon targets for new homes should be re-implemented with a new trajectory and timetable
2. Housebuilders and Renewable Energy developers must work together to develop new cost effective strategies to meet the new carbon reduction targets
3. The Building Regulations Part L and F should be reviewed
4. The compliance system based on SAP and EPCs is not fit for purpose and a new system is required that addresses energy demand reduction targets and post-construction verification
5. The skills needed to achieve quality construction must be embedded at every stage from concept to completion and for all disciplines, trades and professions
6. The Quality Control process at every stage from concept to completion must be tightened up and improved
7. Inhabitants' health and wellbeing must be embedded in all aspects of the design and construction process

About the Good Homes Alliance

The Good Homes Alliance was established in 2007 and now has over 70 members that include, architects, planners, developers, universities, local authorities, urban designers, consultants, building professionals and suppliers whose aim is to build and promote sustainable homes and communities and to transform the whole of mainstream UK house building into a sustainable endeavour.

Further information

To get involved with our activities, call us on 020 7704 3503, follow us @Good_Homes and visit our website at www.goodhomes.org.uk. Alternatively, contact:

Julian Brooks, Network and Programme Manager

julian@goodhomes.org.uk

M: 07980 706838

Richard Broad, Events and Marketing Associate

richard@goodhomes.org.uk

M: 07590 387 883